

Hussein, Iraq used chemical weapons in the Iran-Iraq war.

The administration "rid the Iraqi people of a murderous dictator, and rid the world of a menace to our future peace and security," Vice President Cheney said in a speech last week. Cheney—and other U.S. officials—increasingly point to Libya's decision last month to give up its weapons of mass destruction as a direct consequence of challenging Iraq.

Bush, when asked by ABC's Diane Sawyer why he said Iraq had weapons of mass destruction when intelligence pointed more to the possibility Hussein would obtain such weapons, dismissed the question: "So, what's the difference?"

The U.S. team searching for Iraq's weapons has not issued a report since October, but in recent weeks the gap between administration claims and Iraq's actual weapons holdings has become increasingly clear. The Washington Post reported earlier this month that U.S. investigators have found no evidence that Iraq had a hidden cache of old chemical or biological weapons, and that its nuclear program had been shattered after the 1991 Persian Gulf War. A lengthy study issued by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace also concluded the administration shifted the intelligence consensus on Iraq's weapons in 2002 as officials prepared for war, making it appear more imminent and threatening than was warranted by the evidence.

The report further said that the administration "systematically misrepresented the threat" posed by Iraq, often on purpose, in four ways: one, treating nuclear, chemical and biological weapons as a single threat, although each posed different dangers and evidence was particularly thin on Iraq's nuclear and chemical programs; two, insisting without evidence that Hussein would give his weapons to terrorists; three, often dropping caveats and uncertainties contained in the intelligence assessments when making public statements; and four, misrepresenting inspectors' findings so that minor threats were depicted as emergencies.

Jessica T. Mathews, president of the Carnegie Endowment and co-author of the report, pointed to one example in a speech delivered by Bush in Cincinnati on Oct. 7, 2002. U.N. inspectors had noted that Iraq had failed to account for bacterial growth media that, if used, "could have produced about three times as much" anthrax as Iraq had admitted. But Bush, in his speech, turned a theoretical possibility into a fact.

"The inspectors, however, concluded that Iraq had likely produced two to four times that amount," Bush said. "This is a massive stockpile of biological weapons that has never been accounted for and is capable of killing millions."

Mathews said her research showed the administration repeatedly and frequently took such liberties with the intelligence and inspectors' findings to bolster its cases for immediate action. In the Cincinnati example, "in 35 words, you go from probably to a likelihood to a fact," she said. "With a few little changes in wording, you turn an 'if' into a dire biological weapons stockpile. Anyone hearing that must be thinking, 'My God, this is an imminent threat.'"

Steinberg, who was privy to the intelligence before President Bill Clinton left office, said that while at the National Security Council he saw no evidence Iraq had reconstituted its nuclear weapons program, but that there were unresolved questions about Hussein's chemical and biological weapons programs. "Given his reluctance to address these questions, you had to conclude he was hiding something," he said, adding that given the intelligence he saw, "I certainly expected something would have turned up."

"I think there are [diplomatic] consequences as a result of the president asking these questions [about Iraq's weapons holdings] and the answer being no" weapons, said Danielle Pletka, vice president for foreign and defense policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute, who believes the ouster of Hussein justified the war. "The intelligence could have been better."

Richard Perle, another member of the Defense Advisory Board, said the criticism of the Bush administration is unfair. "Intelligence is not an audit," he said. "It's the best information you can get in circumstances of uncertainty, and you use it to make the best prudent judgment you can."

He added that presidents in particular tend not to place qualifiers on their statements, especially when they are advocating a particular policy. "Public officials tend to avoid hedging," he said.

Given the stakes involved—going to war—Mathews said the standards must be higher for such statements. "The most important call a president can make by a mile is whether to take a country to war," she argued, making the consequences of unwise decisions or misleading statements even greater.

Indeed, she said, the reverberations are still being felt, even as the administration tries to put the problem behind it. A recent CBS poll found that only 16 percent of those surveyed believed the administration lied about Iraq's weapons. But she said there is intense interest in the report's findings, with 35,000 copies downloaded from the think tank's Web site in just five days. "It is too soon to say there was no cost" to the failure to find weapons, she said. "I think there is a huge appetite for learning about this."

SOLUTIONS FOR SKYROCKETING HEALTH CARE COSTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BISHOP of Utah). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, last year's 9½ percent increase in health care spending and costs was the largest in 11 years. Our health care spending per capita doubles that of European nations; yet 43 million Americans have no health care coverage and millions more receive inadequate care.

Many Americans listened to the State of the Union address last night in hopes of hearing solutions to skyrocketing prescription drug costs and insurance costs, driven largely by the uninsured who show up in hospitals and emergency rooms seeking care, forcing all of us who do have health care to pay what I call an uninsured premium, which is one of the great causes of our health care inflation in this country.

Unfortunately, the President's speech did not propose new ways to tackle these problems. The President touted his Medicare bill but ignored the fact that that bill does nothing to address skyrocketing prescription drug prices. We pay in this country 40 to 50 percent more than Canadians and Europeans pay for the same prescription drugs.

To address the worsening problem of the uninsured, the President referred again to a refundable tax credit worth \$1,000. The reality is in the market-

place it is impossible to find plans, individual plans, for \$1,000 worth of any health care coverage, coverage none of us in Congress would take at all.

Until we commit ourselves to market-based solutions that embrace the principle of competition and choice, we will not bring down health care prices and costs. Access problems will only get worse for the uninsured and insured.

By asking our taxpayers to spend \$400 billion on a Medicare prescription drug bill while paying the most expensive prices in the world, we are short-changing our seniors, and we are short-changing our taxpayers. They deserve the common decency and courtesy to get the best prices in the world, not the most expensive prices.

By not taking steps to lower all health insurance costs through market-based, cost-effective solutions, we are compromising the care all Americans receive who are struggling to try to pay for the premium increases and cost increases in their health care system.

Prescription drug spending increased by 15.3 percent in 2003. In Europe, where there is competition and choice for medications, prices on average are 40 percent below what they are here in the United States. In every other industry, food, software, cars, consumer electronics, worldwide competition keeps prices down here in the United States; yet for pharmaceutical drugs, we have a closed market, and we pay the most expensive prices in the world.

Polls show that more than two thirds of Americans think they should be able to purchase drugs from Canada and Europe; yet the final Medicare bill did not include these provisions. President Bush should work with Congress this year to lower prescription drug prices through greater reliance on competition and market forces and not threaten to veto such legislation. To do this, we should continue to work for market access legislation similar to the Pharmaceutical Market Access Act, which passed the House last year.

We should also expand the limited provisions in the Medicare bill to increase access to generics. We should remove the provision on the Medicare bill that prohibits the Secretary of Health and Human Services from doing both negotiation, setting up a Sam's Club-like entity of Medicare and using the 41 million seniors who purchase prescription drugs to reduce prices, just like the Veterans Administration and just like private plans.

The other major skyrocketing health care cost for the rest of us is the uninsured, and this is not just a problem for the poor. The fastest-growing group of people who are working without health care are people who earn \$50,000 to \$75,000 a year. The uninsured in this country who work is a middle-class problem.

Today, all insured Americans pay an uninsured premium in their taxes and their insurance policies, but all the

while the uninsured go without coverage. By addressing the health care needs of the uninsured, the entire system will work more efficiently, more cost effectively. Instead of trying to solve this problem with a tax credit that forces the uninsured to shop in the inefficient and expensive individual market, we should shape a policy for the uninsured around the principles of market competition.

I will propose legislation this year that provides the uninsured a voucher, a health care voucher, to purchase health insurance through a subsidiary of the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program, the same program where Members of Congress and the United States Senate and members of the administration get their health care. This plan will use the efficiencies of the group health insurance market to provide comprehensive insurance and reduce prices, while giving people a voucher. It also will keep the prices in a competitive range to the tax credit the President proposed.

There is nothing wrong with the health care system that competition and choice cannot fix.

THE WAR IN IRAQ AND WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOEFFEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, last night the President gave his State of the Union address to the Nation and to the Congress; and he brought up, rather surprisingly, weapons of mass destruction. The President said that American inspectors have "identified dozens of weapons of mass destruction-related program activities" in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know what a weapons of mass destruction-related program activity is. I would like to find out. I do know this: it is not weapons of mass destruction. We have not found weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. David Kay, the American inspector, has not found them. The international inspectors did not find them.

Like many Members of this House, I voted in favor of the war in Iraq. I did so in order to disarm Saddam Hussein of weapons of mass destruction. I am glad that we have defeated Hussein. I am glad he is in our custody. We and the Iraqi people are better off with him in custody. He was a murderous tyrant. But we have not found the weapons of mass destruction, and it is clear that an extraordinary amount of exaggeration and deception occurred from the White House on the subject of weapons of mass destruction before we went to war in order to win congressional support for going to war.

The President talked last night about our international coalition. The President would like us to believe that we have a broad-based and effective international coalition in Iraq to move forward with securing what is still an

unstable country and to move forward with reconstruction. He listed a long number of nations that have supplied some number of troops to the efforts in Iraq.

The fact is that well over 90 percent of the troops in Iraq are American. About 95 percent of the money being spent in Iraq is American taxpayer dollars, well over \$160 billion to date. The fact is that we did not turn effectively to our traditional and historic allies and move forward with the international community in order to build a coalition to defeat Hussein in Iraq.

The President, when he won his authority to go to war, made a number of commitments. He said that he would exhaust diplomatic options before going to war. He did not. He said he would allow the international inspectors the opportunity to complete their work in Iraq. He did not. He said he would go to the United Nations and build a coalition, and he did not. And now the President would still have us believe that we are on a successful hunt and are turning up weapons of mass destruction in Iraq as part of a broad-based coalition in that country, and neither of those statements is true.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that the arrogance, the unilateralism, and the cowboy diplomacy of the President and the White House have made our challenges in Iraq much harder than they should have been and have made our war on al Qaeda and terror riskier and harder than it should be.

JOB CREATION AND THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S POLICIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, last evening the President of our country addressed us here in the House Chamber, and it is always a great historic moment when that happens. But subsequent to his address, he left on Air Force One this morning for our home district and landed there at taxpayer expense in Air Force One, 6 weeks before the Ohio primary. With his campaign coffers loaded, I am a bit surprised that he did not use campaign funds for his visit today. He moved from the Toledo Express Airport to Owens Community College in order to talk about worker training or job training, which is one of the topics that the President addressed in his address last night. And one of the questions I would ask the President is his administration has cut job-training funds over the last 3 years and though Ohioans welcome any job-training funds this administration finally sees the light of day to produce, I am wondering if the President could not also concentrate on job creation so that jobs are there for workers who receive the training.

It was somewhat ironic that in this morning's Toledo Blade, the major

daily in the region, it was pointed out that though the President is talking about job training at Owens College, the headline reads "Owens lays off training employees before Bush's visit," and one of the several workers who has been handling workforce development at Owens College says she has worked there for 7 years and has been given a pink slip and is this not ironic. Another worker says, "I've been informed that my position has been eliminated." She had been employed at the college for 25 years and started there as a student in 1978. She said, "I'm 5 years from retirement. I really had thought after all this time I'd finish my career at the college and I'd still be a benefit" to the college. "It's just really hard for me to believe."

The other names of those who have been pink-slipped at Owens College I will place in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

This morning, as the President spoke, in his remarks he talked about job training. And Terry Thomas, the executive director of the Ohio Association of Community Colleges, which represents Owens College along with 23 other technical and community colleges in the State, added that there has been little funding for workforce development in Ohio; so any money from the government would help.

I would also like to place in the RECORD that the Bush administration and the Taft administration, both Republican administrations, have had a devastating impact on the State of Ohio where we have had now over 300,000 people out of work and 167,000 manufacturing jobs just in the last 3 years disappear from our State; and while all this is happening, hundreds of millions of dollars that I have voted for here in Congress have not been used by the State of Ohio. Indeed, there is over \$242 million still available for job training and workforce development on deposit here with the Federal Government under programs that have been severely cut back by this administration, and the State of Ohio is not spending those dollars. There are severe problems in Ohio, and it is one of the reasons that Owens College cannot do as good a job as it might do simply because of poor performance by our State government as well as cutbacks in these workforce development programs here at the Federal level.

Mr. Speaker, the Bush administration nationwide has the worst record of job creation since Herbert Hoover, since the Great Depression.

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Over 2,700,000 Americans are without work today. The President did not even use the words "extending unemployment benefits" in his remarks last night. What a tragedy.

Few States have been more severely impacted by the failed Bush administration policies than our State of Ohio. So it is an honor for us to receive a President of the United States, but,